

Jack started, blushed, and looked out of the window. He wondered how the devil the gov'nor knew so much. It was only during the last six months that he had thought of girls at all.

"Thanks, sir," mumbled Jack. "I'll see Jenks."

He marched out, and Sir John sighed.

"I know too much," said Sir John, "that's what's the matter with me. The girls will be hunting him. There's not a farmer's daughter round here that doesn't look at him when he rides by as if she could eat him. I wish I was nineteen, with a colour like his and his strength and all the girls after me."

He sighed again and then smiled, and went hunting again in the wild country of his memory. There were many people who said he was a very bad man. He never pretended to himself that he was not a human being. But he often doubted if his wife was.

"Well, Jack's all right, even if he does come a mucker," said the wise father. If he had not married Mary Carfax, who was never a beauty, and had no wit to balance the lack of it, he wouldn't have had Jack, and he loved the boy almost more than wisely.

And Jack loved him so much that when the inevitable came, and there was trouble with the game-